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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HUDSON IS ONE OF FOUR COMMUNITIES TO RECEIVE URBAN RIVER VISIONS GRANT**

The Town of Hudson will receive a \$128,500 grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) for implementation of its Urban River Visions project. Hudson will use the grant, plus \$36,032 in matching funds, for construction of the Tannery Brook Canal Walk.

The new Canal Walk is proximate to the Assabet River Rail Trail and involves the restoration of canal walls and construction and landscaping of a canal walk along Tannery Brook. The walk will connect Main Street with a municipal parking lot and the new South Street River Park, on the banks of the Assabet River.

This neighborhood is the site of vigorous revitalization efforts, including façade improvements, burying utility wires, and park construction. It is in a blighted target area, the Silas Fenton Historic District, and an EOE Environmental Justice Area. The caved-in retaining walls will be repaired, invasive vegetation and debris will be removed from in and around the brook, and appropriate landscaping will be added.

"Urban River Visions fits into our smart growth philosophy, because it takes advantage of infrastructure that already exists in urban and downtown areas," said EOE Secretary Stephen R. Pritchard. "By providing these grants, we're able to help these communities protect their environmental assets and promote smart economic development."

EOEA launched the Urban River Visions Initiative in 2002 by convening a collaborative planning process with the aim of developing a vision and action plan for urban riverfronts in seven cities and towns in Massachusetts. The communities that were chosen achieved a mix of size and geographic locations: Athol, Chicopee, Easthampton, Fall River, Hudson, Lawrence, and Worcester. Under this initiative, people in each of the municipalities created a unique plan based on their community's needs, including housing, natural resource conservation, recreation,

and commercial development. This round of funding is for the implementation of the recommendations from these municipalities' plans.

Among the benefits that will occur as a result are:

- Invasive vegetation removal.
- Appropriate landscaping.
- Debris removed from brook.
- The Canal Walk serves as a pedestrian gateway into the new park and to the Assabet River.
- As part of the revitalization plan, the Canal Walk will help spur redevelopment of vacant and underutilized properties. It will also improve the connection between downtown and the river.

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